



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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## EDITORIAL

### Harris visit intensifies US military intervention and fuels danger of inter-imperialist war

More than anything else, the recent visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to the Philippines serves the aim of heightening US military intervention in the country and in the Asia-Pacific region. It serves to aggravate tensions with China and further raises the specter of an inter-imperialist war.

Harris' visit came a few weeks after she visited Japan and South Korea, undertaken to flaunt US military power in Asia. Earlier, US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in what's considered a show of outright contempt for the One-China policy.

In her meeting with President Marcos, Jr. and his security officials, Harris reaffirmed US commitments for additional funding of projects under the US-RP Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. Fresh funds would come on top of the over US\$82 million already allocated for the agreement, which allows the US military to construct facilities and preposition military assets inside Philippine military bases.

Even after the termination of the US-RP Military Bases Agreement in 1992, succeeding Philippine puppet regimes forged agreements with the US, allowing the continued presence of US troops in Philippine territory, without paying a single cent for rent. US troops inside Philippine military camps enjoy extraterritorial rights, not subject to supervision by Philippine authorities, including the determination of whether the US store nuclear weapons in these facilities.

These military bases will become legitimate targets of the enemies of the US, in case an inter-imperialist war breaks out.

The US continues to provide weapons, ammunition, equipment and training to the AFP in its brutal counterinsurgency war, characterized by widespread human rights violations against the Filipino people. US military advisers continue to direct the AFP in counter-guerrilla operations using military drones, jet fighters, attack helicopters and artillery weapons, staging wanton aerial bombings and shelling that terrorize communities and damage their farms and natural resources.

US military support increases even as more and more groups, as well as US lawmakers raise the demand for the Biden government to stop funding the brutal war of the AFP and the Philippine National Police.

Oh yes, US VP Harris also had discussions with the Marcos government on topics such as climate action, energy security and food security. They merely serve to prettify the noxious heightening of US military intervention in the Philippines.

Harris so-called "encouragement" to Philippine human rights advocates to persist in their advocacy should likewise be taken with a grain of salt. If anything, actions speak louder than words. Harris' "encouragement" runs counter to the increasing US support to Marcos Jr.'s brutal campaign against Filipino dissenters resulting in massive human rights violations.

Filipinos should unite and assert their sovereignty, oppose intensifying US military intervention, and reject being used as pawns in the brewing US-China inter-imperialist conflict. **UP**



### UNHRC members urge Marcos government to end extrajudicial killings, 'red-tagging'

Several member states of the United Nations Human Rights Council expressed concern about the human rights situation in the Philippines during the Universal Periodic Review Working Group's formal session on 14 November in Geneva, Switzerland.

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At least 30 states said the Philippines should end impunity and bring victims of extrajudicial killings to justice. Other states, including the United States of America, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Romania and Lichtenstein, called in particular on the Marcos II government to end the practice of ‘red-tagging’ that has threatened the lives and liberties of human rights defenders, journalists, environmental activists and indigenous peoples.

Sierra Leone went further and called for the abolition of the anti-communist government agency National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict.

Several more states, including Ireland, Estonia, Austria, France, Lithuania, and Latvia urged the Philippines to rejoin the International Criminal Court or return to the 2002 Rome Statute that established the ICC.

“We view these remarks from the international community as positive and should be seriously considered by the Philippine government. However, as expected, the Philippine government refuses to acknowledge the gravity of the human rights crisis in the Philippines,” said Renato Reyes, secretary general of patriotic alliance Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

Earlier that week, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor said she finds it “quite unsettling” that the Philippine government has ignored the 11 recommendations made by the UNHRC when the country was last reviewed in May 2017.

According to Ms. Lawlor, the Philippines was urged to carry out impartial investigations into the killings of human rights defenders, to enact measures to protect them, and to promote a safe and enabling environment for their work.

Ms. Lawlor spoke in an event leading to the fourth UPR on the Philippines. Other speakers in the event included delegates from Philippine human rights alliance Karapatan, the National Union of Peoples’ Lawyers, People’s Alternative Media Network, iDEFEND and Ron de Vera, son of political detainee and women’s rights advocate Adora Faye de Vera.

De Vera later submitted a formal complaint to Ms. Lawlor’s office on his mother’s arrest and detention, detailing deprivations suffered by inmates in Philippine prisons. NUPL secretary general Josalee Deinla also submitted a complaint on the continuing detention of political prisoner Reina Mae Nasino and two others, despite a court’s declaration that the search warrants used in their arrest are defective.

Nasino made international headlines in 2020 when prison authorities made it difficult for her to attend the wake and burial of her infant she gave birth to in detention.

Under the UPR process, the human rights situation in the Philippines will again be under review in 2027. **UP**



*Scene of the Crime. AFP troops killed 16-year old Everly Kee Jacolbe and her pregnant mother in their home. Photo: pna.gov.ph*

## **NDFP condemns AFP abuse of children in the civil war**

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines condemned the Armed Forces of the Philippines for grave violations of children’s rights, as revealed in a special report of the Communist Party of the Philippines released on 20 November.

The report, [Dirty War Against Children](#), documents how child rights violations intensified in 2020 and 2021 during the Covid-19 related lockdowns. It said that security forces of the Manila government, took advantage of the

pandemic to occupy communities and launch widescale and intensive military operations.

“Children have been victims of the civil war between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the New People’s Army from the start of the civil war. This is the first time that a report focuses on children and the effects of the civil war on them,” said Coni Ledesma, Head of the NDFP Special Office for the Protection of Children.

According to Ledesma, the AFP is responsible for various cases “...where children have been threatened, arrested, forced to surrender, sexually abused, killed and accused of being child soldiers. Children have also been forced to stop schooling and to leave their homes together with their parents because of militarization in their areas.

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“There have also been cases of babies and young children snatched from their homes, hostaged, and so-called ‘rescued’ to force their parents to surrender because they are suspected to be members of the New People’s Army.”

The latest case reported involve the killing of Everly Kee Jacolbe, 16, when the AFP 62nd Infantry Battalion attacked the hut where she and her pregnant mother lived in Trinidad village, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental. In another incident, the AFP 59th Infantry Battalion shot Kyllene Casao, 9, in Guinhawa village, Taysan town, in Batangas province, when she and her father were on their way home. The report states that “...in both cases, the AFP falsely claimed that the children together with their elders were killed in encounters between the AFP and NPA.”

In Catubig town, Northern Samar, on 8 February 2022, two children aged 9 and 12, were shot by troops of the AFP 8th Infantry Division. The children were with a group of farmers who the AFP troops misidentified as NPA fighters. According to reports, the AFP fled from the scene instead of rendering aid.

“The NDFP Special Office for the Protection of Children demands that the government of Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. stop the abuse of children and to abide by international laws on the protection of children and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law,” Ledesma concluded. **UP**

## NPA Cagayan Valley unveils literacy program for Red fighters

The New People’s Army in Isabela province, in the northern Philippine region of Cagayan Valley, has recently developed a literacy and numeracy program especially designed for NPA members who do not know how to read, write and do simple math.

The NPA primary education program, called LitNum, is conducted in formal classroom style where two or more students of equal ability, participate. Advanced programs are also available for Red fighters who already know how to read and count, so that they can further develop their skills.

A great number of NPA Red fighters come from the peasantry and national minorities, many of whom never had an opportunity to attend primary school.

According to NPA Cagayan Valley, LitNum is designed to give the Red fighters more confidence to lead political activities among the local communities. Some of the subjects taught are Reading Comprehension; Listening and Understanding; Creative and Technical Writing; Basic Math and Public Speaking. There are also lessons on science and history.

LitNum uses a variety of teaching methods, including theatrical forms referencing the local culture. According to NPA Cagayan Valley, one proven method is ‘Song Analysis’ where students listen and explain the message of songs, which develops critical thinking. Students also participate in workshops on poetry and essay writing, focusing on revolutionary themes.

Red fighters in the LitNum program learn to listen, take notes, comprehend and take tests during classes on science and history. A Marxism-Leninism-Maoism dictionary has also been developed containing common words used in the studies and concrete examples of how the terms are used.

The NPA instructor’s group has also developed a curriculum adopted to students with dyslexia. A student is asked to use pieces of wood and strings to represent letters and numbers which otherwise cannot be recognized or distinguished when written down.

Literacy and numeracy classes are also taking place in various communities throughout the archipelago under the auspices of the New People’s Army and local organs of the people’s democratic government. **UP**



Image: [philippinerevolution.nu](http://philippinerevolution.nu)